ART THAT FRANCE WANTS FROM GERMANY

First Steps in the Agitation For an Artistic Indemnity

By Royal Cortissoz

In the dispatches that come from Paris just now it is apparent that the French are preoccupied in the peace conference with matters military and economic. They are thinking, above all things, of their protection in the future against Germany's potentialities for war and for industrial aggression. There would seem to be little opportunity at present for merely aesthetic considerations. Nevertheless it is gratifying to be able to report indications in the French press of just such an agitation for the German payment of artistic indemnities as The Tribune has been steadily urging. A long article in "L'Illustration," by M. Auguste Marguillier, shows that something has already been done to advance the subject. There could be no more appropriate moment for recurrence to it.

As far back as July, 1915, the bombardment of Arras, which with incendiary shells destroyed what was left of the collections in the Palais de Saint-Vaast, drew from the Historical Society of the Pas-de-Calais a protest exactly in the sense of the scheme of reparation we have been advocating. The members of that body did not demand vengeance or reprisals. What they asked in the shape of simple justice was that works of art in Austria and Germany which had had their origin in France or Belgium should after the war be assigned to the devastated regions. "Tout le monde," as Marguillier remarks, is to-day in sympathy with that idea. The Académie des Beaux-Arts gave its adhesion to it at a meeting last December, and several societies have addressed to the government pleas in the same vein. In "Le Figaro," recently, M. Deville, president of the Fine Arts Commission of the City of Paris, has formulated similar claims. In the Chamber of Deputies three members, MM. Amiard, Goust and Dariac, have brought forward a resolution "tending to the payment in works of art of indemnities for the artistic losses which France has suffered at the hands of Germany." In justification of this principle of compensation—if any further justification is needed—M. Marguillier cites certain German observations which are of the most pointed interest.

The German Idea

It was a Bavarian Minister who told Baron Kerryn de Lettenhove how they felt at Munich about their works of art, some of which the Belgian archaeologist was soliciting for an exhibition at Brussels in 1910. If any of them were lost it would not be possible for the Belgians to make restitution in money. The balance could only be made right by the choice of works of the same merit from Brussels! How could the Germans now object if they are submitted to the very rule which they themselves were ready to formulate? Baron Wangenheim, at Constantinople, bewailed to Ambassador Morgenthau the moderating influence of the rulers of Great Britain, Russia and Austria, which saved Paris from the extremes of Prussian rapacity in 1871. This time, he exultingly declared, his master would make war without pity. "We shall transport to Berlin all the treasures of art in Paris which belong to the state." The French are now remembering, and emphasizing, pronouncements of this kind. Naturally, since Germany felt that way about it, they cannot see why there should be any objection to the transportation of a certain number of works of art from Berlin to Paris. The situation is different to-day from that which existed in 1871. France had done no harm to Germany. There was reason for moderating the demands of the latter. But think of the harm done by Germany to France in this war!

The war had been raging for only a few weeks—it was, in fact, in October, 1914—when Herr Emil Schaefer announced in a Berlin magazine, "Kunst und Kunstler," what had happened and what might be expected to happen. The might of Germany had made itself felt at Liége and Brussels, Namur, Malines and Antwerp. In a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, the news that the Kingdom of Belgium had ceased to exist would doubtless arrive. In anticipation of that event the amiable Herr Schaefer counted not solely upon cash returns. "Each town of this country," he observed, "was formerly a home of art, each church was a sanctuary of painting. The descendants of Van Eyck and Rubens have preserved many paintings which aside from their ideal value possess a material value which may be expressed in millions, and upon this part of the national patrimony the hand of the conqueror will fall." He enumerated the principal masterpieces to be annexed from Antwerp, Brussels and Bruges, not forgetting, at Ghent, that great altar piece of St. Bavon's, by the Van Eycks, to which we have more than once had occasion to refer. It was in 1914, we repeat, that this piratical programme was candidly aired. In 1919 it comes home to roost. A nice, far seeing lot, the Germans, but not quite far seeing enough. M. Marguillier rolls their unguarded confessions like so many sweet morsels under his tongue. Who shall say him nay? He contrasts the German campaign of loot with the scheme of reparation which his countrymen and the Belgians now have in mind and leaves the world to judge which speaks of rapine and which of justice. There can be no doubt of the verdict, nor, we may add, can there be any criticism of the scheme which M. Marguillier sketches.

France in Germany

It concentrates upon French works, aiming in the first place at those paintings and sculptures in the imperial palaces of Prussia which belonged specifically to the former Kaiser. The enumeration is edifying. The eighteenth century French school is portentously represented. There are no fewer than thirteen paintings by Watteau, thirty-seven by Pater, twenty-six by Lancret, four by Nattier, four by Chardin, seven by De Troy, and by Pesne the examples are simply "innumerable." Other French masters to be reckoned with are Poussin, Le Brun, Coypel, Largillière, Raoux, the Van Loos, Mignard, Rigaud, Boucher, La Tour and David. There are sculptures by Bouchardon, Coustou, Pigalle, Lemoyne, Vasse, Houdon and others. It was the ambition of Frederick II to create in the depths of Germany a little corner of France, filled with its architecture, its gardens, its furniture, paintings and books. His emissaries in France, Count Rothenburg and the architect Knobelsdorf, served him well, and he had French architects, artists and sculptors at hand to carry out his wishes. M. Marguillier fixes a relentless eye upon what they left behind them. It is time, he thinks, for that corner of France to be moved back, and he particularizes.

He wants to hang beside the great "Embarkment for Cythera" in the Louvre not only the famous version of that masterpiece in the Kaiser's collection, but the renowned sign which Watteau painted for his friend, the picture seller Gersaint, one of the historic gems of the period. He goes after the French treasures of the house of Hohenzollern with chapter and verse, carefully naming names. For example, there is the "Bonaparte" of David. He explains, bluntly, that it is the one which was taken from the château of St. Cloud by Blücher in 1815. He is disconcertingly ready with these reminders, as he is with the essentially French associations which seem doubly to invoke the return of divers works now held in Germany. Obviously Le Brun's "Portrait of the Banker Jabach and His Family" belongs among the Jabach pictures in the Louvre which Colbert bought for his king. And where but in Paris should hang Mignard's portrait of Marie Mancini, Mazarin's niece? The mention of these two canvases recalls the fact that the inquisition is in no wise to be stopped within the limits of the Kaiser's palaces. As we have pointed out in surveying Germany's resources for the payment of an indemnity in works of art, they embrace famous museums all over the country.

For Old Sake's Sake

The Le Brun and Mignard just cited are in the Berlin Museum, which has also some notable examples of Watteau, Lancret, Largillière, Poussin, Gaspard, Doughet and Claude. At Munich the great gallery would yield important works by Clouet, Philippe de Champagne, Jouvenet, Vivien, Poussin, Claude and Boucher. There are French works at Dresden, Cassel, Brunswick, Schwerin and Karlsruhe. And M. Marguillier is careful not to omit the responsibility, and means of repayment, to be ascribed to Vienna. He talks, suggestively, too, of bringing back from the enemy countries the things that belong to France or Belgium for old sake's sake. In the course of the war Dr. Bode, it appears, took to Frankfort from Lille an "Assumption of the Virgin," by Piazzetta, which had originally adorned a church in the German city. If that is a good idea, when worked to German advantage, Dr. Bode ought to be the first to see how justly, in the circumstances, it might be made to serve the French. Let Saint-Omer have back from Berlin the wings now there which Simon Marmion, of Valenciennes, painted for the retable in the monastery of St. Bertin in the fifteenth century. Let Melun reclaim from Berlin the "Etienne Chevalier" of Fouquet. When the Van Eyck panels are returned to Ghent let Berlin and Munich send to Louvain the paintings by Thierry Bouts which belong there; let Frankfort give back to Belgium her paintings by the Maître de Flemalle, and Dantzic her Memling, while Vienna restores to Antwerp the three great compositions which Rubens painted for the Church of the Jesuits in that city. There are, indeed, scores and hundreds of cases in which certain pictures in Germany, restored to France and Belgium, would only be coming home after what we have called before nothing more nor less than exile. Reparation, as we insist upon repeating, in season and out of season, cannot be expressed in this case simply in terms of cash. There must be such reparation as is possible in the world of ideas. To bring back to France and Belgium works of art created in those countries and long held, for one reason or another, in an alien atmosphere in Germany, would go far to secure such reparation.

M. Marguillier knows only too well the nature of the people with which the conference has to deal. In a footnote he revives the story of how Berlin contrived to buy the celebrated "Adoration of the Shepherds," by Hugo von der Goes, from a Spanish convent. When the Spanish government sought to interfere with this proceeding on the ground that the picture formed part of the national patrimony Germany threatened to withdraw her ambassador from Madrid. The purchase accordingly went through. And yet, with this spirit to remember, M. Marguillier nevertheless stays his hand, as it were. In our own survey of Germany's artistic treasure we noted masterpieces of all the schools. This magnanimous Frenchman practically ignores them. He would like to see in the Louvre the "Four Apostles" of Durer, from Munich, but his demands adhere to French art, and in his restraint he makes, after all, a weighty point. His plan of reparation but gains in logic and practicality, as it rests upon the eternal fitness of things. French art for the French—that is surely a persuasive argument to put before the peace conference. And let it not be forgotten that no matter how fully the plan might be accepted and carried out the debt of Germany would still be paid only in part. It is not only for theft, but for immeasurable destruction that she has to atone.

Chardin's "La Ratisseuse"
(One of the masterpieces that France wants from Germany)

Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

The National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors opens to-day at the Fine Arts Building its twenty-eighth annual exhibition.

The new one-man shows this week include an exhibition of water colors by William Jean Beauley at the Reinhardt gallery. Pictures by Kenneth Hayes Miller may be seen at the Montross gallery beginning on Tuesday.

Impressions of things festal come back with memories of the exhibitions the American Water Color Society used to have in the old building of the Academy of Design years ago. There were banners and decorations. The collection always included, too, a certain number of ambitious performances, full dress pictures, if we may so describe them. Now things have changed. The fifty-second annual exhibition of this society, which has been opened at the National Arts Club, has no gala air about it and it contains no "star" pieces. Has the blithest of all mediums gone out of fashion? Hardly. In a way it was never more popular. Perhaps the difference is due to the fact that there are not so many hands qualified to give it to-day really brilliant exploitation. As a counterweight there is a positive increase in the number of water colorists who, if not brilliant, are, at all events, sufficiently clever to make their works sprightly and amusing. The present show contains a goodly proportion of interesting drawings.

The most conspicuous are by Mr. Childe Hassam, to whom the Hudnut prize has been awarded. His sketches along the Hudson and at Cos Cob have a certain admirable solidity, but we have known him to be more exhilarating than he is in this group. Mr. Chauncey Ryder's crisp, sparkling landscapes well assert themselves. He has never used more agreeable color with a more breezy touch. Mr. Gifford Beal also gives a refreshingly good account of himself. His "Fifth Avenue, Red Cross Week," is delightful, much better than anything we have hitherto seen pretending to suggest the street beflagged. Mr. Howard Giles has some capital sketches done on the Maine coast, drawn with great spirit and precision and very rich in tone. The landscape work is always good at the water color show, and there are plenty of workmanlike notes here by Ernest Albert, Frank Hazell, Charles P. Gruppe, John F. Carlson, J. L. Hoftrup and F. Lensch. Mr. H. Hintermeister provides one of the few fresh sensations of the occasion in his drawings of wild birds, which are most beguilingly picturesque, and there is a hint of a kindred feeling for nature in the sketches of animals by Mr. Lief Neandross. The figure work is negligible, if one takes it very seriously, but lightly considered there are some pleasing bits, like Mr. A. Cole's "Pomona," in pastel, or the graceful "Autumn Leaves" by Mr. Louis Berneker or the fairy subjects by Miss Frances B. Comstock and Mr. Howard Heath. Lightness in motive and in handling is the most commendable thing in the show, which invites no very detailed comment but gives a certain pleasure.

A veritable well spring of human vitality is the source of what is most interesting in the exhibition of sculptures which Mr. Edmond T. Quinn is making at the Knoedler gallery. He shows a photograph of the Booth Memorial in Gramercy Park, to which favorable reference was made in The Tribune not long ago, and the print serves to remind us of the dignity, the elevation, which he can achieve in monumental art. But the smaller bronzes and marbles of which this collection of some twenty-odd pieces is made all emphasize the intimate quality in his work, the feeling for character which is his leading trait. Delightfully significant of this is the statuette called "On the Summit." The windblown figure here is more than the sketch of an open air type which it is nominally content to be. It is really the study of an individuality, a portrait full of life and meaning, of movement caught in a moment of thoughtful impressionism. All of Mr. Quinn's more formal portraits are like this. Their truth is not left to be recognized only by the friends of the sitters. The observer who had never laid eyes upon Francis Wilson, or Allan Pollock, or Paul Haviland, or Clayton Hamilton would know at once that Mr. Quinn had placed before him truly eloquent characterizations of those individuals, characterizations subtly felt and made fairly to tingle with reality. Mr. Quinn has a manual skill to match what we can only describe as his spiritual realism. His busts are searchingly modelled. If he is not an artist of clearly marked idiosyncrasy, if he is richer in honest workmanship than in originality of style, the absence of the one merit is at any rate well atoned for by the presence of the other. He presents one or two essays in pure beauty, one or two nudes in which, again, we miss the note of style but discern, on the other hand, a high technical ability. And in one of these nudes, the little "Torso," his technical excellence takes on something like distinction.

The National Society of Craftsmen is starting a "School of Craftsmen." The technical and practical side of each craft will be taught and the aims of the school will also be to bring out individuality and to inculcate the value of beauty in craftsmanship.

The exhibition of pictures which Mr. William M. Paxton, of Boston, has arranged at the Folsom gallery might be described as one more tribute to the cult of Ver Meer, as was most conspicuously popularized when Mr. Tarbell put forth his "Girl Crocheting" some years ago. It is the cult for human life treated as still life, for pretty women posed in a state of immobility in simple interiors. Mr. Paxton brings a faintly dramatic atmosphere into some of his motives. "The Other Door" and "The Telegram" are both illustrations of something more than graceful idleness. But in these, as in all the other canvases, the important thing for the artist is technical virtuosity, a certain "precious" quality in color and in surface. Mr. Paxton has sound composition and he is smoothly efficient, if in no wise distinguished in draughtsmanship and modelling. Where he fails to reach his goal is in beauty of color and particularly in that fineness of surface, combining suave polish with transparency and depth, which we associate with Ver Meer. His tones are commonplace, and in the manipulation of them he is not so much suave as sleek. Quality, the one trait which pictures like these should have, is the one trait we miss.

Another challenge from the modernist camp is heard from at the Bourgeois gallery, this time advanced in drawings and paintings by Mr. Jennings Tofel. He explains himself in a preface to the catalogue, always a perilous experiment. An artist's works should say all that he has to say to the public. Mr. Tofel's affirmations in color and in black and white are, unfortunately, obscure. He covers a canvas with curious swirls of color and calls it "Out of Silence," or "Love in a Garden," and we wonder why. His symbolical subjects, in fact, strike us simply as so many inchoate dithyrambs in color. He is a little more persuasive in his painted portraits and in a few canvases that seem like vague echoes of the late A. P. Ryder. In these there are pleasant hints of romantic sentiment and there is some charm of color. But Mr. Tofel's art is as yet essentially tentative. He seems to be feeling his way rather than to have arrived anywhere, and this view of the matter, inspired by the paintings, is doubly confirmed by the drawings. In color he recalls Ryder. In black and white he points, dimly, to the possible influence of Blake. In neither does he make the conclusive appeal of a really interesting artist, interesting in idea and in craft.

At the Lotos Club there is an exhibition, lasting through to-day, to-morrow and Tuesday, of paintings by artist members of the club.

At the Ardsley Studios, in Brooklyn, there is a show divided between Japanese prints and works by contemporary Americans. Julia Kelly, Samuel Rothbart, Thomas Bodnar and Bernard Gussow form the latter day contingent.

At the Ehrich Print Gallery an interesting exhibition is announced to open next Tuesday, one devoted to the lithographs and etchings of Odilon Redon. It is presented as constituting a "comprehensive review."

To lovers of the Far West, with its picturesque Indians, cowboys, horses and great sweeping prairie lands, the exhibition of Western genre paintings now at the Babcock Galleries will prove a source of delight. A painting filled with violent action is "A Side Winder," by William R. Leigh, and another, "The Enemies' Horses," by W. Herbert Dunton, shows a wild stampede. Charles Russell's "Medicine Man" is very effective with its troop of gorgeously bedecked Indian horsemen riding out, as it seems, from a sunset sky. A vivid piece of work more "painty" than pictorial is "Francesca," by Robert Henri, showing a young Indian woman in a gorgeous shawl. The poetry of the West has appealed to Maurice Braun and he shows two charming landscapes, "Nocturne" and "Southern California." O. E. Berninghaus also shows two well handled canvases and Irving Couse has treated his "The Blanket Weaver," in a flat decorative fashion which is very attractive. H. Harris Browne is represented by a strong portrait of "Bobtailed Horse," a Cheyenne Indian.

Books from the library of the late Frederick R. Halsey, selection and duplicates from Mr. H. S. Van Duser, and from other collectors, including rare books and mediæval manuscripts sold by order of A. Mitchell Palmer, Alien Property Custodian, are now on exhibition at the Anderson Galleries prior to their sale by auction, beginning to-morrow at the Anderson Galleries. Among the collected sets of first editions are complete collections of Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Bret Harte, George Meredith and Bernard Shaw. Association books are represented by such desirable items as a presentation copy of the "Vicar of Wakefield," and a first edition of "Thucydides," with autograph and manuscript notes by Milton. Rare Americana are numerous and include a considerable collection of the scarce Mathers, Eliot and Penhallow, also rare Colonial and Revolutionary tracts, pamphlets and broadsides. A portrait of Charles Dickens by W. P. Frith will appeal strongly to Dickens lovers and the complete collection of engraved autograph portraits of the Presidents of the United States, from Washington to Wilson, will also be included in the sale.

In the Art Salon of the Hotel Majestic, under the direction of Dr. Hovey Allen, Miss Content Johnson is now exhibiting a group of twenty-eight paintings, including portraits, interiors and landscapes. In portraiture Miss Johnson is less happy than in her charming impressions of quaint interiors and Old World gardens. In "The Spinner" and "Canadian Interior" she achieves a subdued luminous quality of great charm. A canvas with much poetic feeling is "Bristol Canal," in which the artist contrasts cleverly a red barn by the side of the canal with a decorative group of dark green trees.

"Brick Church, Old Deerfield," is also a happy inspiration, with its dappled effect of sunshine and shadow. Miss Johnson was a pupil of William Chase, and his influence is felt in several of her canvases. Portraits are of the artist's mother, Mrs. Lyman, Mrs. Lockwood, Mrs. Buel and Mrs. Nase.

An interesting exhibition held under the auspices of the Architectural League of New York is a group of water colors by Ida A. Johnson of California wildflowers and a group of California landscapes showing the wild flowers in relation to the landscape, by J. M. Culbertson. Miss Culbertson gets the brilliant sunshine of California in her landscapes, and in "Carmel Shore" she shows a riot of vivid blue buckwheat flowers, repeated again in the distant blue of mountains. A California poppy field is also very effective. The flower studies of Miss Johnson could have been treated in a more decorative manner. As it is, they are workmanlike and show effectively the beauty of those wonderful wild flowers of the West.

At the Whitney Studio Club, 147 West Fourth Street, a group of four artists is exhibiting wood engravings, monotypes, charcoal drawings and color plates. G. Watt, as a wood engraver, loses nothing of the subtleties of the famous paintings which he reproduces. He is particularly successful in "The Apple Gatherers," after Karl Anderson, and "The Trousseau," after Charles Hawthorne. The monotypes by Salvatore Anthony Guarino show a charming delicacy of color. Aubrey Beardsley has influenced the work of Miriam Gerstle. She shows weird imagination and effective coloring in "Sea Monster and Nymph" and "Elephant Dance." Charles P. Rising uses his medium in a sympathetic manner. His charcoal drawings have much poetic value in their softened lighting effects. A portrait group in brown crayon by Joseph Suib is included in the exhibition, which closes February 27.

Mr. Leon Engers Kennedy is exhibiting a group of Psychochromes at the Paint Box Galleries, Washington Square South. Mr. Kennedy explains that "Psychochrome" translated means "soul color," and "the eye of the soul directs the hand of the craftsman."

An interesting display of batiks may now be seen at the studio of Miss Laffon, 14 East Fiftieth Street. Five years ago Miss Laffon commenced the study of this interesting and complicated system of dyeing, and to-day her work shows with what thoroughness and knowledge she has adapted beautiful design to silks, velvets and coarse linens. A large silk wall decoration shows Persian influence in deep blues and reds, a velvet cushion has a bold design in white, blue and dark brown, and a large cover in coarse linen has a tapestry effect. Miss Laffon creates her own designs, and shows good taste in not becoming too violently imaginative.

Calendar of Exhibitions

American Art Galleries, Madison Square, South—From February 19, the contents of a Washington residence; from February 22, a collection of American paintings formed by N. E. Montross, and tapestries, furnishings and embellishments from various estates.

Anderson Galleries, Park Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street—From February 18, the library of J. W. R. Crawford; from February 21, final part of the Herschel V. Jones library.

Arden Studios, 599 Fifth Avenue—Paintings by John G. Johansen, to February 26.

Ardsley Studios, 110 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn—Japanese prints and paintings, to March 1.

Art Salon, Majestic Hotel—Paintings by Content Johnson, to March 6.

Architectural League, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street—Paintings by Ida A. Johnson and J. M. Culbertson, to February 19.

Arlington Galleries, 247 Madison Avenue—Paintings by American artists, to February 29.

Art Students' League, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street—Paintings by Haley Lever, to February 22.

Babcock Galleries, 19 East Forty-ninth Street—Western Genre painters, to March 1.

Bourgeois Galleries, 668 Fifth Avenue—Paintings and drawings by Jennings Tofel, to March 1.

Civic Club, 14 West Twelfth Street—Drawings, etchings, lithographs and watercolors by New York artists, to February 24.

Daniel Galleries, 2 West Forty-seventh Street—Recent work by Daniel Halpert, to February 22.

Ehrich Galleries, 707 Fifth Avenue—From February 18 to March 12, lithographs and etchings by Odilon Redon, and from February 20 early American portraits to March 6.

Ferargil Gallery, 24 East Forty-ninth Street—Works by E. L. Redfield, through February.

Folsom Galleries, 560 Fifth Avenue—Paintings by William MacGregor Paxton, to March 8.

Gimbel and Wildenstein, 647 Fifth Avenue— War pictures by artist soldiers of France, to February 18.

Knœdler Galleries, 556 Fifth Avenue—Sculpture by E. P. Quinn and Daniel C. French, to February 22.

Kraushaar Galleries, 20 Fifth Avenue—Paintings and decorative panels by Vincent Tack, to February 22.

Milch Galleries, 108 West Fifty-seventh Street—From February 18 to March 1, paintings by Jerome Myers.

Macbeth Galleries, 450 Fifth Avenue—Thirty paintings by fifteen American artists, to March 1.

Montross Galleries, 550 Fifth Avenue—Paintings by Kenneth H. Miller, from February 18 to March 8.

National Arts Club, 19 East Nineteenth Street—American Watercolor Society, to February 28.

Paint Box Galleries, Washington Square South—Psycho-chromes, by Engers Kennedy.

Reinhardt Galleries, 565 Fifth Avenue—Water colors, by William Jean Beauley, to March 1.

The Cosmopolitan Club, 133 East Fortieth Street—Paintings by Maurice Fromkes, to March 18.

Whitney Studio Club, 147 West Fourth Street—Wood engravings, monotypes, charcoal drawings and color plates, by a group of artists, to February 27.

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